

FRANK, BEVA

DRAWER 22

111. 8009. 085. 02.927

SCULPTORS - F
(BUSTS)

Statues of Abraham Lincoln

Berva Frank

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
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Lincoln Statute Drive Still Needs Money

The People's Tribute to Lincoln Committee has announced that they have raised one third of the funds necessary to complete their project. The group is a non-profit organization that has taken on the task of placing a life-size bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln at the most visited Lincoln site in America. Currently there is no statue of the sixteenth President at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield.

"Within a year or two we expect to change that," said committee chairman David Robertson. The statue will be placed in front of the Visitor Center at the site and will depict Lincoln as he was when he lived in Springfield and rode the Eighth Judicial Circuit of Illinois. It will show the young lawyer who was formulating and refining his definition of democracy as the young nation struggled with the complexities of a government run by the people--a concept that was unique among the nations of the world in the mid 1800's.

The statue will be based on John R. Frank's "Prairie Lawyer". Frank was a nationally known Lincoln sculptor from St. Charles, MO. The first attempts at the life-size statue were not satisfactory and efforts were made to find a new artist to do the enlargement. Frank's daughter-in-law, Berva Frank, of Barchtown, IL, began work on the project last May. She completed a full-size bust of the "Prairie Lawyer" which was approved by John R. Frank only two days before his death on September 10, 1988.

The wax bust was then cast in bronze and has been highly praised. Dr. Wayne Temple, Chief, Deputy Director of the Illinois State Archives and a noted Lincoln scholar and author, called it "the best statue attempted of Lawyer Lincoln in recent years!"

The National Park Service is also enthused about the project. They feel that the bronze statue "would constitute a highly appropriate addition to the landscape surrounding the Lincoln Home Visitor Center. It would be a notable feature of the Historic Site for millions of visitors."

Berva Frank, who holds a masters degree in art, became involved in the project because she felt she understood what her father-in-law was trying to communicate through his sculpture of Lincoln as a young lawyer in Springfield.

According to her, "John R. Frank's life long admiration of Abraham Lincoln influenced everyone with whom he came into contact. He shared his artistry, knowledge and inspiration with hundreds of school children. He saw Lincoln as a common man who was able to rise from his humble beginnings to lead America through one of her most challenging times. My personal goal is to convey that spirit to the 'Prairie Lawyer', the young relaxed Lincoln--the common man. Sculpture is a form of communication. We are trying to communicate not only that here was

a self-made man who rose to the highest elective office in the country and met the challenges, but also that it is possible in America today to dare to dream, to dare to reach for whatever challenges you are willing to take. It becomes more than a tribute to a man. It becomes a tribute to the democracy he preserved and strengthened--a form of government that opens the door of opportunity for all."

One third of the \$100,000 needed for the project has been raised almost entirely through small contributions from individuals who wish to honor Lincoln's contribution to America. The committee is also offering to present any individual, group or corporation donating \$10,000 to the project their choice of a limited edition bronze of either the original 20" tall "Prairie Lawyer" by John R. Frank or the life size bust by Berva Frank. All donations are tax deductible.

Prominent Lincoln historian and author Gabor Boritt is writing an essay about Lincoln and democracy to be delivered on the day the statue is dedicated. The dedication date will be set after the funds for the project have been raised. A time capsule will be enclosed in the base of the

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Lincoln . . .

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statue and will include a copy of Dr. Boritt's essay, mementos from the project and a list of all those people whose contributions made the project possible.

If anyone would like to become a part of this historic project, send donations to: The People's Tribute to Lincoln, Inc., David Robertson, Chairman, P.O. Box 1202, St. Charles, MO 63302.

Most of the Lincoln statues in America have been placed through private donations to fund raising efforts such as this.



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